15th February 1955]

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" Sir, the report suggests that there must have been staggering deaths in the period of two months when the epidemic was virulent. On my perusal, there is no reference to casualty during this period. I wish to know whether it is an accidental omission or a deliberate hiding? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" Probably, the medical officer who went there was not able to collect figures regarding mortality."

SRI A. APPU :—" Sir, the report of the medical officer shows that besides dysentery, there were other serious diseases in the island and the doctor says that he had no medicines with him. There is a general complaint that in the hospitals and dispensaries in the islands, sufficient stocks of medicines are not kept. Will the Government be pleased to send all sorts of medicines to these dispensaries? "

MR. SPEAKER :—" All sorts of medicines? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" Sir, when a medical officer is posted, after a dispensary has been started there, the required medicines will be made available."

* 717 *Q.*—SRI K. C. GOPALAN UNNI : Will the Hon. the Minister for Health be pleased to state—

(*a*) the details of the report submitted by the doctors deputed to go into the prevalence of dysentery in the Laccadive Islands in March 1954; and

(*b*) whether the Government will be pleased to place a copy of the report on the table of the House?

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" (*a*) & (*b*) The hon. Member may refer to the detailed report on the dysentery epidemic in Agathi and Kavarathy islands which has been placed on the table of the House in answer to the starred question No. 716 (answered on 15th February 1955)."

SRI T. C. NARAYANAN NAMBIAR :—" In the report placed on the table of the House, it is stated that the medical officer deputed had no medicines with him to treat the patients who were suffering from trachoma and other diseases of the eyes, bronchial asthma and other diseases of the respiratory system, diseases of the digestive system and deficiency diseases. May I know from the Hon. Minister why, when a medical officer was deputed to such a distant island where medicines are not procurable, he was not equipped with proper and necessary medicines for treatment of patients and may I also know from the Hon. Minister if any action was taken at least after the report was received by the Government? "

THE HON. SRI A. B. SHETTY :—" Sir, after the Medical Officer of Kavarathy was sent to the Agathi island, another Assistant Surgeon was sent by a special chartered ship with necessary medicines, staff, and everything."

Dr. K. B. MENON :—" Sir, since these serious complaints are not epidemic, but more or less endemic and since the island is farflung without any means of communication, will the Government consider the necessity of a Health Survey? "

The Hon. Sri A. B. SHETTY :—" I have already stated that the matter of improving communications and taking necessary measures for the purpose of promoting the health and welfare of the people is under consideration."

Sri T. ANANTA PAI :—" Sir, the report placed on the table of the House makes a very sorry reading. It is found that 90 per cent of the population of the island are on starvation level and particularly during the monsoon seasons food supplies are scarce; there are certain social habits which are capable of improvement; apart from medical facilities that might be provided, the fundamental defects should be removed. Will the Government see that proper steps are taken at least to ameliorate the conditions of these islanders? "

The Hon. Sri A. B. SHETTY :—" Yes, Sir. The matter is under consideration."

Mr. SPEAKER :—" Question No. 718 will be taken up on the 21st."

Welfare of fishermen community.

11-40 a.m. * 719 *Q.*—Sri A. RATNAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have received any memoranda presented by the fishermen community on 10th September 1954 requesting the Government to improve their conditions and status; and

(*b*) whether the fishermen community has been treated as scheduled castes in respect of education in any part of the State?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) The Government have received a memorandum, dated the 10th September 1954, from the Fishermen's United Front, Madras. It is being examined.

" (*b*) Only the Paravans of the Fishermen Communities, who are not converts to Christianity, are treated as Scheduled Castes for purposes of educational concessions. The other fishermen communities are treated as Backward Classes for purposes of educational concessions."

Sri A. RATNAM :—" இவர்கள் நடத்திய மகாநாட்டில் கனம் மந்திரி அவர்கள் கலந்துகொண்டார்களா ? அப்படி கலந்துகொண்டிருந்தால் அங்கு குறிப்பிட்ட முக்கியமான விஷயங்களைப்பற்றி எந்தவிதமான நடவடிக்கை எடுக்க திட்டமிட்டிருக்கிறார்கள் ? பரவர் வகுப்பைச் சேர்ந்தவர்களுக்கு குறிப்பிட்ட அளவு ஷெடுல் வகுப்பைச் சேர்ந்தவர்களுக்கு அளிக்கப்பட்டிருக்கும் சலுகை அளிக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறதா? "